

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ERDA-05 CIAE-00 H-02 INR-07

IO-11 L-03 NSAE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-04 PRS-01

SAJ-01 SAM-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 NSC-05

(ISO) W

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R 211730Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5841

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

USNMR SHAPE

CINC EUR VAIHINGEN

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 01104

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, MBFR, GW, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR: WAITING FOR THE RUSSIANS

BEGIN SUMMARY: THINGS HAVE BEEN QUIET IN BONN ON THE MBFR FRONT SINCE THE WESTERN NUCLEAR OFFER WAS MADE TO THE EAST LAST DECEMBER. DISCUSSION OF MBFR POLICY PLAYED A MINOR ROLE IN THE FRG'S DEFENSE POLICY DEBATE THIS MONTH, WITH THE GOVERNMENT REAFFIRMING FRG POLICY AND THE OPPOSITION COMPLAINING THAT THE NEW WESTERN POSITION ILLUSTRATED WESTERN WEAKNESS. A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE BASED ON CONVERSATIONS WITH INFORMED DEFENSE MINISTRY CIRCLES RAISED SOME INTERESTING THOUGHTS ABOUT THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE FRG MBFR POLICY-MAKING MACHINERY HAS BEEN
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HUMMING IN STANDBY PENDING RUSSIAN REACTION TO THE

WESTERN NUCLEAR OFFER. MBFR OFFICIALS SUSPECT THE SOVIETS MAY NOT RESPOND DEFINITELY UNTIL AFTER CONCLUSION OF THE 25TH CPSU CONGRESS IN FEBRUARY.

2. MBFR DID NOT FIGURE PROMINENTLY IN THE JANUARY 15 BUNDESTAG DEFENSE DEBATE. BOTH DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER AND CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT REPEATED THE FRG'S DETERMINATION TO PROCEED IN CONCERT WITH THE ALLIES TO SEEK MUTUAL AND BALANCED FORCE REDUCTIONS LEADING TO APPROXIMATE PARITY IN GROUND FORCES IN CENTRAL EUROPE.

3. CDU/CSU OPPOSITION DEFENSE SPOKESMAN DR. MANFRED WOERNER, AN ARDENT NATO SUPPORTER, FOUND HIMSELF IN THE DIFFICULT POSITION OF HAVING TO CRITICIZE -- BUT NOT TOO HARSHLY -- THE OPTION III DECISION TAKEN BY THE NATO MINISTERS. HE CHIDED THE ALLIES FOR NOT MAINTAINING THEIR PREVIOUS POSITION AS LONG AS NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE RESULTS, PARTICULARLY SINCE THE SOVIETS HAD BEEN LESS THAN FORTHCOMING IN THE TALKS. OTHER MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION WHO MENTIONED MBFR ALSO CAST THEIR CRITICISM IN TERMS OF WESTERN WEAKNESS IN THE FACE OF SOVIET OBSTINACY RATHER THAN KEYING ON THE NUCLEAR OFFER ITSELF.

4. ADELBERT WEINSTEIN, POLITICAL-MILITARY WRITER FOR THE FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE, WROTE AN ARTICLE WHICH APPEARED IN THE JANUARY 14 EDITION WHICH ARGUED THAT THE GDR'S PEOPLES' ARMY WAS STRONGER THAN SOVIET FORCES IN EAST GERMANY. THE ARTICLE ALSO INCLUDED SOME THOUGHTS ON MBFR BASED ON CONVERSATIONS WITH "POLITICAL CIRCLES" OR "THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP" IN THE DEFENSE MINISTRY. HE WROTE THAT IN THE COMING MONTHS IN VIENNA THE SOVIETS ARE EXPECTED TO SEEK A REDUCTION OF THE BUNDESWEHR, AND THAT GERMAN DIVISIONS AND AIR SQUADRONS HAVE BECOME A "QUALITY ARTICLE". WEINSTEIN CONTINUED THAT THE KREMLIN HAD NOTHING AGAINST THE AMERICANS REMAINING IN

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SAJ-01 SAM-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 NSC-05

(ISO) W

----- 082327

R 211730Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5842

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

USNMR SHAPE

CINC EUR VAIHINGEN

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EUROPE IF OPERATIVE UNITS OF THE BUNDESWEHR WERE REDUCED. WEINSTEIN SAID THE SOVIETS COULD RESPOND WITH A "SPECTACULAR GESTURE" TO SUCH A MEASURE BY WITHDRAWING SOME OF THEIR FORCES, WITH THE SOVIETS ANTICIPATING A POLITICAL CHAIN REACTION TO BE SET IN MOTION IN NATO FROM GERMAN TROOP REDUCTIONS.

5. WEINSTEIN WROTE THAT FEWER GERMAN DIVISIONS COULD SHAKE AMERICAN SECURITY PERCEPTIONS IN EUROPE, THEREUPON LEADING TO US TROOP REDUCTIONS WHICH WOULD DRAW IN THEIR TRAIN ALLIED CONVENTIONAL FORCE REDUCTIONS. WEINSTEIN CONCLUDED HIS COMMENTS ON MBFR BY NOTING THAT FRG SECURITY POLICY WAS TO MAKE NO PRE-CONCESSIONS IN VIENNA, BUT INSTEAD TO STRENGTHEN THE FRG'S NEGOTIATING POSITION BY STEADILY IMPROVING BUNDESWEHR CAPABILITIES.

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6. COMMENT: WE ASSUME THE FMOD "POLITICAL CIRCLES" WHICH SERVED AS THE SOURCE FOR WEINSTEIN'S ARTICLE ARE VERY CLOSE TO DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER HIMSELF. WE ARE NOT CERTAIN HOW MUCH WEIGHT TO ASCRIBE TO THE VIEWS REPORTED, SINCE THE EAST HAS NOT YET REACTED TO THE NUCLE OFFER. THE ARTICLE COULD REPRESENT NOTHING MORE THAN INTELLECTUAL SPECULATION ON THE PART OF FMOD OFFICIALS. HOWEVER, THE COMMENT THAT THE SOVIETS ARE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE SEEKING BUNDESWEHR REDUCTIONS COULD MEAN THAT SOME OFFICIALS HAVE ALREADY DISCOUNTED

A POSITIVE SOVIET RESPONSE TO OPTION III UNLESS AND UNTIL
THE BUNDESWEHR IS FACTORED INTO THE WESTERN POSITION.

7. WE FIND IT DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN WEINSTEIN'S
"SPECTACULAR GESTURE" BY THE RUSSIANS OF SWAPPING THEIR
TROOPS FOR GERMAN FORCES. WE HAVE NOT PICKED UP ANY
HINTS THAT FRG POLICY MAKERS ARE CONSIDERING MOVING IN
THIS DIRECTION. RATHER, GERMAN ACTIONS AT NATO
DURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NUCLEAR OFFER ARGUE FORCE-
FULLY AGAINST ANY SUCH MEANDERING FROM THE ALLIANCE
POSITION.
HILLENBRAND

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: BALANCED FORCE REDUCTIONS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: saccheem
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BONN01104
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760023-0246
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760136/aaaabfeb.tel
Line Count: 181
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ACDA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: saccheem
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25 MAR 2004 by CollinP0>; APPROVED <03 AUG 2004 by saccheem>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MBFR: WAITING FOR THE RUSSIANS BEGIN SUMMARY: THINGS HAVE BEEN QUIET IN BONN ON THE
TAGS: PARM, GE, UR, NATO, MBFR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006